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WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN EXAMINES RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THEIR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH OTHER WESTERN NATIONS.

VOICE: IN PORTUGAL THIS PAST WEEK, VOTERS ELECTED A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT WILL BE DOMINATED BY MODERATE FORCES.

IN SPAIN, PREMIER (CARLOS) ARIAS NAVARRO ANNOUNCED A REFERENDUM TO BE HELD IN OCTOBER ON CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES THAT WILL PREPARE THE WAY FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS EARLY NEXT YEAR.

BOTH DEVELOPMENTS, IN THE VIEW OF WESTERN OBSERVERS, ARE ENCOURAGING AS INDICATING A DESIRE BY BOTH THE PORTUGUESE AND SPAINSH PEOPLES TO REDISCOVER THE ROAD TO POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN TUNE WITH THOSE OF THE REST OF WESTERN EUROPE. CONVERSELY, BOTH DEVELOPMENTS ALSO INDICATE A REJECTION BY THE PEOPLE OF PORTUGAL AND SPAIN OF ANY RADICAL SOLUTIONS--EITHER OF THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT--IN THEIR SEARCH FOR NEW POLITICAL ANSWERS TO THEIR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

THAT THE PORTUGUEESE PEOPLE EXPRESSED THIS DECISION BY THEIR BALLOTS LAST SUNDAY IS UNQUESTIONED. FOR THEY GAVE THE MODERATE SOCIALIST PARTY FIRST PLACE IN THE VOTE, AND THE MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD POPULAR DEMOCRATS SECOND PLACE. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, PORTUGUESE VOTERS GAVE THE MODERATE RIGHT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY THEIR PREFERENCE FOR THIRD PLACE OVER THE COMMUNISTS, WHO CAME IN A POOR FOURTH IN SUNDAY'S ELECTIONS.

IN THE CASE OF SPAIN, THE PEOPLE AS YET HAVE NOT SPOKEN THROUGH THE BALLOT. BUT POPULAR SENTIMENT AS EXPRESSED BY LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES, INCLUDING KING JUAN CARLOS,

OBVIOUSLY HAVE CONVINCED THE ARIAS GOVERNMENT OF THE NEED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN ORDER TO RELIEVE PRESSURES THAT COULD CREATE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS. SO WHILE THE FIRST TENTATIVE STEPS TAKEN IN SPAIN ARE NOT AS CLEARLY VISIBLE AS REFLECTING THE RECORDED DECISION OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE, THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARIAS ANNOUNCEMENT ARE CLEAR.

THESE EVENTS, OF COURSE, HAD BEEN HOPED FOR IN THE WEST--IF NOT FORSEEN BY TREND-WATCHERS. AND THEY EXPLAIN AT LEAST IN PART THE NEW ATTITUDES BEING SHOWN TOWARD SPAIN AND PORTUGAL BY THEIR WEST EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS. FOR EXAMPLE, LISBON HAS BEGUN TALKS WITH ITS NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ALLIES ON A MAJOR MILITARY AID PACKAGE FOR PORTUGAL'S ARMED FORCES. SUCH A PROJECT NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN IF COMMUNISTS HAD SUCCEEDED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS TO ACHIEVE POWER.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS RESUMED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET ON ESTABLISHING NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS IN ADVANCE OF SPAIN'S ADMISSION TO THE MARKET AS A FULL-FLEDGED MEMBER.

ADMITTEDLY, THE DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL ARE TENTATIVE STEPS TOWARD A RETURN OF WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRACY TO THE IBERAIAN PENINSULA. BUT AS THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (4/29) SAYS OF PORTUGAL IN AN EDITORIAL, WHATEVER DANGERS ITS NEW DEMOCRATI INSTITUTIONS MAY FACE IN THE FUTURE, THEY ARE WELCOMED BY "DEMOCRATS EVERYWHERE" WHO ARE ENCOURAGED BY SEEING PORTUGAL WHERE IT IS TODAY. THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF THE STEPS ANNOUNCED BY PREMIER ARIAS IN MADRID.

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